

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

MC-02 IO-10 /084 W

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P R 111700Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5209

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

OSAF/INL PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN 1059

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AFB

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

ASD WPAFB OH/CC/OI/YP

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 0683

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: F-104 FIGHTER REPLACEMENT

REF: A. THE HAGUE 645; B. BRUSSELS 1157

1. FEBRUARY 10 MEETING OF NETHERLANDS AND BELGIAN
FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS RESULTED ESSENTIALLY IN
A STAND-OFF, ACCORDING TO NETHERLANDS AIR FORCE SOURCES,
WITH FONMINS VAN DER STOEL AND VAN ELSLANDE SAYING
THEY SAW NO RPT NO REASON NOT TO SELECT THE F-16,
WHILE DEFENSE MINISTERS VREDELING AND VANDEN BOEYNANTS
FAVORED THE MIRAGE IN ORDER TO SUPPORT EUROPEAN
AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. OUR SOURCES DID NOT INDICATE
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WHETHER THERE WAS ANY DISCUSSION OF THE BELGIAN JOINT

PAPER PURPORTEDLY RECOMMENDING A "EUROPEAN SOLUTION" (REF B). THE FOUR MINISTERS DID AGREE THAT CONSORTIUM STEERING COMMITTEE SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO ADDRESS SEVERAL ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO US, FRENCH AND SWEDISH AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO PRICE GUARANTEES VIS-A-VIS SEVERAL HYPOTHETICAL CONTINGENCIES. MINISTERS ARE ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE AGREED THAT WHEN VREDELING AND VANDEN BOEYNANTS MEET WITH THEIR DANISH AND NORWEGIAN OPPOSITE NUMBERS OF FEBRUARY 17 THEY WILL ARGUE FOR A FURTHER DELAY IN RECOMMENDING A CHOICE TO THE FOUR CONSORTIUM GOVERNMENTS.

2. OUR SOURCES EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT WHEREAS VANDEN BOEYNANTS' SUPPORT FOR THE MIRAGE IS BASED STRICTLY ON "PERSONAL" GROUNDS, VREDELING IS MAKING A MORAL PRINCIPLE OUT OF BUYING THE MIRAGE BECAUSE OF HIS DEEP-SEATED EUROPEAN CONVICTIONS. IT IS NOT THAT VREDELING HAS ANY ANTI-AMERICAN HANG-UPS OR IS AGAINST THE AMERICAN PLANE BUT RATHER, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, THAT HE CANNOT BRING HIMSELF TO RECOMMEND ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE FRENCH PLANE. HE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE REMARKED, FOR INSTANCE, THAT IF THE FRENCH HAD COME IN WITH A LOWER FLY-AWAY PRICE THAN THE F-16 PRICE, HE WOULD HAVE HAD AN EASY JOB IN OVERRIDING OPPOSITION TO PURCHASE OF THE MIRAGE.

3. COMMENT: ABOVE INFORMATION CORROBORATES ANALYSIS GIVEN EMBASSY BY MOD SECRETARY GENERAL PEIJNENBURG LAST MONTH ON ALIGNMENT OF DUTCH AND BELGIAN FONMINS IN FAVOR OF F-16, WHILE THE TWO DEFENSE MINISTERS WERE EQUALLY STRONG IN FAVOR OF THE MIRAGE. AS FAR AS THE GON IS CONCERNED, THIS LATEST MEETING CONFIRMS A NUMBER OF RECENT INDICATIONS THAT THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE ON POLITICAL GROUNDS AND WILL BE STRONGLY INFLUENCED IF NOT DETERMINED, WE SURMISE, BY THE POSITION TAKEN BY PRIMIN DEN UYL. DCM'S SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT WITH STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK MORNING OF FEBRUARY 12 SHOULD PROVIDE FURTHER INSIGHT INTO THIS RAPIDLY EVOLVING SITUATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, ARMS PRODUCTION, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975THEHA00683
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750050-0679
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750252/aaaabusu.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 THE HAGUE 645, 75 BRUSSELS 1157
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <15 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: F-104 FIGHTER REPLACEMENT
TAGS: MASS, NL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006